



AMERICAN CENTER NEWSLETTER

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American Center
Colombo
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Celebration of World Environment Day in Kandy



A group of students who produced a pen/pencil holder and a bouquet of flowers out of waste material

American Corner Kandy celebrated *World Environment Day* with over 50 students participating in an educational awareness program and activities. Kandy Mayor Mahendra Ratwatte liaised with the education authorities, enabling schools to send their Sinhala and Tamil medium students and teachers for this American Corner program.

Dr. Ajantha Perera, Founder of the National Program on Recycling of Solid Waste in Sri Lanka gave an awareness talk on 'Green Economy,' followed by students engaging in using waste material provided by the Municipal Council to create attractive and useful items on the theme 'Waste to Profit'. Their creations included a water filter, flower basket, handbag, shoe-rack, pen/pencil holder and various ornamental items, with each group naming a price for the items they created, much to the delight of Ambassador Patricia Butenis who supported the environment program enthusiastically. Ambassador Butenis awarded certificates to the students along with Mayor Mahendra Ratwatte and Deputy Mayor Sena Dissanayake.

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HAPPY 4TH OF JULY



New York's Empire State Building is backlit by fireworks exploding over the Hudson River during the 2011 Fourth of July fireworks show.

America's Independence Day is July 4, marking the date in 1776 when the country's Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence. It is celebrated with parades, fireworks, concerts and other festivities.



Presentation on "U.S. Electoral Process"



Student raising questions on the U.S. Electoral Process from speaker Mr. Gonzalez

On May 24, 2012, U.S. Embassy Outreach Officer Hector Gonzalez did a presentation on the U.S.

Electoral Process to a group of university students and faculty members at the University of Colombo's Department of International Relations. Mr. Gonzalez described how the United States' elections combine overlapping layers of local, state, and federal laws to uphold the principle of "Government for the People, by the People, and of the People." Understanding the process is key to understanding the politics and political culture of the United States. The presentation included the origins of the American Electoral System, how primary and general elections work, and a review of what has happened so far in the upcoming 2012 presidential elections. A lively discussion ensued after the presentation with the students and faculty.

Social Media Workshop Series

The American Corner Jaffna conducted a social media workshop for school students on May 22, 2012, as part of an ongoing series of workshops being held around Sri Lanka. Mr. Prasad Perera of the Public Affairs Section conducted the workshop. He shared his knowledge on social networking and micro-blogging with the participants. Students were very pleased to learn about social media networks such as Facebook, YouTube and Google+, as well as micro-blogging services like Twitter. The presentation was interpreted into Tamil for the participants' convenience. A number of similar



Audience at the workshop

workshops are going to be held in coming months across the country.

'Open Mic Competitive Poetry Slam – Season V'



Performers with Public Affairs Officer Christopher Teal and Outreach Officer Hector Gonzalez

The American Center Colombo hosted the 'Open Mic Competitive Poetry Slam – Season V' on May 24, 2012, providing an opportunity for people to showcase their talent and express themselves freely through poetry. Fifteen poets, many of them

university and school students, presented their poems with their own style to an appreciative audience. Outreach Officer Hector Gonzalez facilitated the program. At the end of the event, Evelyn De Zoysa won the "Best Performance" and was awarded a certificate and the winning prize. Bavatharani Maheswaran won the prize of "Audience Choice" and was awarded a certificate and a prize as well. All the performers were given an American publication and a free lifetime membership to the American Center Library in Colombo and to American Corners in Kandy and Jaffna.

The American Center plans to continue to serve as a platform for talented Sri Lankans to express themselves freely and creatively by hosting an ongoing series of poetry slam competition to be held in the coming months. Youth are encouraged to participate in these events.

American Center Encourages Students to Preserve Environment



Ambassador Butenis is looking at the drawings with much interest

On June 09, 2012, the American Center Colombo hosted an environment program on the theme 'Bat Conservation' with fifty children participating in a poster-drawing event. Students from four children's homes in Colombo and suburbs representing the Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim communities and the four major religions of Sri Lanka took part in the awareness program and showcased their drawing talent. Dr. Ajantha Perera, a well known environmentalist and Founder of the National Program on Recycling of Solid Waste in Sri Lanka, gave a talk on 'Bat Conservation' as an inspirational message prior to the drawing commenced.

Ambassador Patricia Butenis observed with great interest children's drawings and was pleased to see

the message of conservation emerging as their art took form. She donated gift items on the bat theme for all participants and the children were thrilled to select from the wide range of gifts. A certificate of participation signed by the Ambassador was awarded to all participants by American Center Director Chris Teal, who encouraged the children to participate in similar activities of the American Center. The posters will be on display at the



Boys from Parakrama Boy's Home with Public Affairs Officer Christopher Teal

American Center.

This program promoted understanding and appreciation of the importance of environment protection among young children and gave them an opportunity to showcase their drawing talent.

Kindle Reading for Blind Students



Students getting to know the Kindle

On May 17, 2012, the American Center hosted a Kindle Reading Club for a group of young visually impaired students from The School for the Blind in Ratmalana. Students listened to the audio reading of the book 'Ramona and her Father' by Beverly Cleary with interest as this was a first-time experience with Kindles. They were delighted to get to know how the Kindle operates and appreciated the reading. They were accompanied by their teacher also visually impaired.

The reading was led by Outreach Officer Hector Gonzalez. This will be an ongoing program for students of the School for the Blind to understand and improve their English.



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<http://www.facebook.com/usembassycolombosi>

Screening of "The Last Flight of Petr Ginz"



Students and teachers viewing
'The Last Flight of Petr Ginz' with intense

On May 23, 2012, the American Center hosted a special screening of 'The Last Flight of Petr Ginz' on the Holocaust. The documentary tells the story of Petr Ginz, a child from Prague who perished during

the Holocaust. The film opens a window into Petr's life through his artwork, novels, short stories and magazine articles, and the journey he made from child to young adult, from innocence to the painful awareness of inhumanity. A group of students and teachers from British School of Colombo attended the screening by invitation and had a lively discussion with Political Officer Jacob Chriqui and Outreach Officer Hector Gonzalez on the impact of holocaust and what actions individuals can take to prevent such incidents happening in the community they live in.

Hannah Perry-Bower, a teacher who participated, said, "The students really enjoyed it and found the film incredibly moving. It is so important to try and bring the subject alive outside the classroom and this really helped us to do this."

Ambassador Butenis visits Fathima Welfare Center

On June 05, 2012, U.S. Ambassador Patricia Butenis paid a special visit to the Fathima Welfare Center, a Muslim girls' home in Colombo. She planted flowers and donated a set of books to the center, and spent some time with the girls and their teachers. Ambassador Butenis also had a chance to see the growth of the mango tree that she planted last year at the center.



Ambassador being welcomed by the Fathima Welfare Center administration with bands troop playing at the front

Art Exhibition "The Freedom to Smile"



This month the American Center is holding an exhibition of works from artists and photographers of Cartwheel, an art therapy program for children affected by war.

The exhibition was officially opened June 7 by Ambassador Butenis with other members of the diplomatic corps, members of the business community, trustees and well wishers of the Cartwheel initiative, and students of the Sip Sevana home in Dehiwala.

American Center supports underprivileged children to learn English

The American Center Colombo began a DynEd online English language program, a six-month course for a group of thirteen underprivileged children to improve their English standard. The Ameri-

can Center partnered with the Headway School of Languages to train the teachers. The Warehouse Project, a local NGO, enlisted the students for this program. Students interacted well with DynEd, a dynamic and interactive English course, and expressed their enthusiasm to attend regular classes for the next six months.

American Center Discusses on Women's Rights



Mrs. Arundathie Abeysinghe delivers her presentation.

On June 21, 2012, there was a presentation at the

American Center to discuss on "Challenges in Implementing International Conventions in Sri Lanka and the effect on women's rights". A researcher on Women's Issues, Journalist and a lecturer at the American National College, Colombo, Mrs. Arundathie Abeysinghe delivered the presentation to school children, lawyers and NGO activists who deal with women's issues in Sri Lanka. Mrs. Abeysinghe discussed some legal conditions applicable in Sri Lanka and how they affect on implementing international conventions.

The participants had an opportunity to hear a very informative speech with some examples of issues faced by women of different ethnic backgrounds.

"Festival of World Cultures" Exhibition

On June 5th, 2012, the American Corner Kandy supported the Global Link Club of St. Sylvester's College, Kandy, exhibition "Festival of World Cultures." School students put up stalls on different countries to show their cultural, geographical, nationality, and population differences.

The American Corner provided material including flags, maps, posters for the stall on the U.S.A. Many number of students visited the booth and acquired information about the U.S.



Booth U.S.A attracted many schools students at the exhibition

American Center Celebrates "World Environment Day"



Participants listen to Dr. Ajantha Perera at the American Center

its monthly public lecture for June 2012 under the title 'Environmental Issues and their Impact on Human Life' at the American Center Auditorium. Dr. Ajantha Perera, Founder of National Program on Recycling Solid Waste presented her perspectives and insight.

The lecture was drawn large gathering including key persons in the environmental sector, academics, university and school students and members of the media who are interested in the environment. The presentation was linked via digital video conference (DVC) to the American Corner in Jaffna. The public lecture series organized by the American Center highlights current issues important to the U.S. and Sri Lanka.

On June 14, 2012, in commemoration of the World Environment Day, the American Center organized

U.S. Embassy Partnership Supports Dairy Farmers in the East



Padmarahini and Jeyarajah created a cooperative through DEEP, which gave them and nearby villages a chance to negotiate a fair price for their milk.

At the height of the conflict in 2007, Padmarahini Naharajan was displaced from her home and left as the sole provider for two children. She toiled in the fields and sold small quantities of milk to middlemen at low prices to make ends meet. Life was difficult until she heard about the Dairy Enhancement in Eastern Province (DEEP) project, a public-private partnership of USAID, the development arm of the U.S. Embassy.

DEEP, a three-year USD10 million project, taught Padmarahini and others how to increase the

quantity and quality of milk production, and reach new markets, increasing income. DEEP, a partnership between the USAID, U.S. based dairy cooperative Land O'Lakes, and Sri Lankan CIC Agri Business, has trained over 4,000 dairy farmers, distributed 3,500 small grants, established milk chilling center cooperatives, linked 50 milk producer groups, provided modern dairy processing facilities across the Eastern Province, and linked dairy farmers with service providers and financial institutions.

On May 29, as the project neared completion, DEEP hosted an event in Batticaloa to share project results and lessons learned with key government, private sector and other stakeholders. The event promoted best practices through project publication "DEEP Success Stories and Lessons Learned."

Most importantly, the event's discussion focused on how to sustain the successes made under the project by dairy farmers like Padmarahini. From her training from DEEP Padmarahini increased her herd and milk production substantially. But the real transformation came when she and her neighbor, Jeyarajah, formed a milk producer group.

U.S. Embassy Supports Further Development in Batticaloa

On June 19th 2012, Ambassador Patricia Butenis inaugurated three projects completed by the USAID - a bakery in Vakarai, Batticaloa, staff quarters at the Pulipanchakal School, and a children's park at the lighthouse complex in Batticaloa.

Located on an increasingly busy road connecting Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara, the bakery will give the women of Vakarai a much-needed opportunity. The women, many of whom are war widows and heads-of-households, received USAID and other donor-supported training in business management and microfinance. USAID also trained them on the fundamentals of marketing and sales, financial management and business planning, and provided technical assistance to develop a detailed business plan, ensuring the sustainability of the enterprise.

In Pulipanchakal, Korralaipattu South, Batticaloa, Ambassador Butenis opened the newly-constructed staff quarters at the Pulipanchakal School. Since 2008, USAID and the U.S. Pacific Command have



Together with Tammie Harris of USAID, Ambassador Butenis in front of newly-constructed staff quarters at the Pulipanchakal School.

supported the school by constructing classrooms, providing electricity and building water, sanitation and drainage facilities. Thanks to these infrastructure improvements, the school can now accommodate students up to grade eight, and teachers can make use of on-site living quarters, helping to guarantee year-round instruction.

During her visit, Ambassador Butenis also opened a newly-constructed children's park at the lighthouse complex in Batticaloa.

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American Center Promotes Reading Culture among Young Sri Lankans



Bill Linsenmeyer(left) reads from "Coraline" while Sanjev Desilva (right) reads from McDougal Littell at the storytelling program

The American Center library has been conducting a monthly reading club named "Readers Are Leaders" since January 2010. Several American Officers attached to the U. S. Embassy Colombo have read to children at the reading clubs. Later on, the Asia Foundation in Sri Lanka joined hands with the

American Center Colombo in this Endeavour and volunteered to read to children.

The June 2012 reading club was held on June 23, at the American Center, Colombo. Neil Gaiman's "Coraline" was read by Bill Linsenmeyer Professional Associate attached to the U. S. Embassy, to children of 11-15 year old group, while Sanjev Desilva from Asia Foundation read from McDougal Littell Literature to children of 6-10 year old group. Afterwards the DVD version of "Caroline" was screened. The children were invited to share their reading experiences during the reading hour.

Teacher Development Workshops in South

From May 21-22, 2012, the U.S. Embassy's Senior English Language Fellow Jake Barber, in cooperation with the National English Language Teachers Association of Sri Lanka, conducted a two-day workshop for fifty primary and secondary level English teachers at the Tangalle Regional English Support Center. Participants engaged in many interactive activities throughout the workshop.



Teachers participate in a workshop activity

U.S. Embassy Supports Further Development in Batticaloa . . .

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Ambassador Butenis making the initial purchase at a newly opened bakery in Vakarai, Batticaloa



Newly-constructed children's park by the USAID in Batticaloa

Monthly Photography Competition



U.S. Embassy, Colombo conducts monthly photography competitions for school children between 12-18 years of age. Winning entries will show creativity, skill, and an ability to select a subject based on the monthly theme. Both electronic and hard copies of photographs will be accepted. First, second and third place awards will be given in the following age categories:

- 12-14 years
- 15-16 years and
- 17-18 years

Photography Competition – June-July 2012

Submit photographs on the theme "**Celebrate the World Environment Day.**" Along with the photograph, entries must include a brief explanation of the subject and why it was selected. Please send your photograph along with the coupon given here with your details certified by your school principal or the class teacher to the below address.

Photography Competition – June-July 2012
American Center
44, Galle Road
Colombo 03

You may send your photograph electronically to the email address amcentersl@state.gov with your Name, Age Category, Address, Contact Details, School and Name of the School Principal included.

Our panel of judges will assess all entries and then

World Environment Day in Kandy . . .

American Center Director Christopher Teal mingled with the students and encouraged their efforts. Students engaged in a tree-planting campaign which commenced soon after the Mayor planted an Ehala (Golden Shower) plant in the garden of the D.S. Senanayake Public Library. At the end of the program, many of the students enrolled as members of the Environment Club inaugurated by the American Corner to do more environment related programs in Kandy.

select first, second, and third place photographs under each age category. All three winners will receive a collection of American literature, a life time membership to the American Center Library and a certificate signed by the U. S. Ambassador. Winners will be invited to attend an award ceremony at the American Center in Colombo.

Rules and Conditions

1. Submitted electronic images must be no larger than 1024 pixels width & 720 pixels in height and are not to exceed 500kb in size.
2. Photographs can be either black and white or color.
3. If sending printed photographs, the size should be at least 4"x 6".
4. All entries must be submitted on or before August 18, 2012.
5. You may only enter a maximum of 3 photographs into each competition.
6. Please do not post any photographs that are obscene, discriminatory, or which otherwise violate any local or international laws
7. The photographer must be the sole author and owner of the copyright of photos entered in to the competition.
8. By entering this contest the photographer agrees that any winning photograph you submit may be used by the American Center/U.S. Embassy Colombo solely for the purposes of this competition or future contests and no other purpose, these uses include; displaying the entries in the American Center lobby, on the official website, Facebook and cropping and re-sizing the image as necessary to fit pre-defined formats for the competition.

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A student receiving his certificate of participation from Ambassador Butenis

Film Screenings at the American Center

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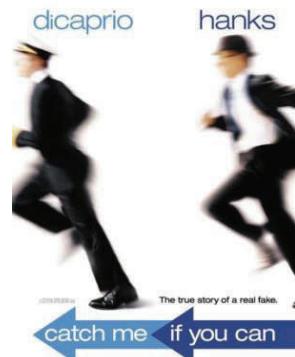
July 10 - Everyone Says I Love You (1997, 101 minutes)

Woody Allen directs an all-star cast in this charming and sweet musical comedy. The story follows a large family in its romantic adventures across New York, Paris and Venice.



July 17 - Catch Me If You Can (2002, 141 minutes)

Steven Spielberg directs Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hanks in a breezy adventure about a young con artist and the FBI agent who pursues him. Fun and funny with a surprisingly emotional core.



July 24 - The Untouchables (1987, 119 minutes)

The gangster Al Capone and the legendary lawman Elliot Ness square off against each other in Prohibition-era Chicago in Brian DePalma's gorgeous and exciting action thriller. With Robert DeNiro, Kevin Costner, Sean Connery, and Andy Garcia, from a script by David Mamet.



July 31 - Super 8 (2011, 112 minutes)

J.J. Abrams directs a talented young cast in this science fiction thriller. A group of aspiring filmmakers go into the forest to make a movie, and discover a secret that could destroy their whole world.



Movies start promptly at 6:00pm every Tuesday. Seating is limited and is first-come, first-served. Please contact the American Center at amcentersl@state.gov or at (11) 249-8146 with any questions. Entrance free !

Movies for Youth at the American Center

**July 7
3:30 pm**



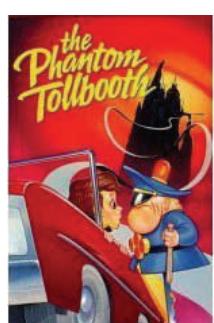
**July 14
3:30 pm**



**July 21
3:30 pm**



**July 28
3:30 pm**



Every Saturday at 3:30 pm